

WHAT'S NEXT FOR MY LIFE?™

TIPS FOR MANAGING YOUR SABOTEURS

(Adapted from the Coach Training Institute materials)

As we step forward to change our lives an inner alarm goes off. The tendency to maintain the status quo is a strong universal force and any of your plans to make changes will set off your Saboteurs in full force.

All of us have a self-sabotaging inner voice – or voices – that hold us back. Sometimes called the “Inner Critic”, “Negative Self Talk”, “Voices in Your Head”, among others, the Saboteur has all of the reasons ready for why your goal or plan is stupid, dangerous, hopeless or otherwise ill advised. The Saboteur is especially skilled at taking a small piece of the truth and fabricating it into a reason for stopping, or never starting the ideas you have. Virtually everything that uses the words “should” “need to” and “ought” or begins with “why?” are signs that your Saboteur is running the show. Below are several ways that you can use to shut down your Saboteur.

1. Acknowledge or name the Saboteur. And be sure to separate yourself from it.

Example: “My Saboteur says I can’t ask for the raise I want because it may jeopardize my job.” You Reply “Thanks Saboteur for your input. I disagree.” And the Saboteur goes away.

2. Ignore the Saboteur. Do not interact with it at all.

Example: “I want to work out 5 times per week but when I get ready to head for the gym I keep telling myself “I don’t have time”, I don’t have any energy”, “I have errands to do.” When this happens, recognize that this is your Saboteur talking to you and just ignore it. Go work out. Before you know it the Saboteur is gone and you feel great.

3. Give the Saboteur a job to do or a place to go.

Example: “Saboteur, you’ve been working really hard. I want you to go to the mall and look for someone else’s Saboteur to talk to.”

4. Ask for the Saboteur’s opinion and then do the opposite.

Example: “Hi Saboteur. What do you think I should do about asking for a raise? Oh, you think it’s a really bad move? Well, thanks for sharing. “ And then go ask for your raise.

5. Personify the Saboteur. Give it a name and a life of it’s own.

Example: A common Saboteur for many people is the one that tells us we have to be perfect. No matter what we do it is not good enough; it just sets the stage for the possibility of failure at the next thing we try. Giving the Saboteur a name like “Little Miss Perfect”, and imagining her (pink curls, overweight and that smug expression on her face) make her easily recognizable and illustrate how badly she wants you to stay the same.

6. Consider your personal values that drive your course of action. When you confirm to yourself that your actions are taking you in a direction that really matters to you the Saboteur often disappears.

7. When your Saboteur is complaining or concerned about your ideas, remind yourself of your vision or long-term goal.

Example: When your Saboteur is telling you that you can’t do this, you will fail, people will make fun of you, or whatever, ask yourself “If I ignore the Saboteur, where will I be in a year? Where will I be if I listen to her?” Often, the reminder of your desired long-term result will enable you to disregard the Saboteur.